

Biophytum petersianum Klotzsch

Family:

Oxalidaceae

Peters, W.C.H. (1861) *Naturwissenschaftliche Reise nach Mossambique* 1: 81, t.15. Type: In Querimba und auf der Insel Zanzibar eingesammelt.

Stem

Annual herb 1-40 cm. in height with a simple erect appressed-pilose or appressed-pubescent or tomentose stem with a simple rosette of leaves at the apex.

Leaves

Leaves up to 5 cm. long; leaflets in 3-10 pairs, the terminal pair usually 1½ times as long as the next pair and the rest decreasing gradually in size, up to 10 × 6.5 mm., the smallest ca. 3 mm. in diam., chartaceous, opaque, obliquely elliptic or oblong-elliptic to subcircular, margin sparsely ciliate with long thin hairs, otherwise glabrous, with up to 6 (8) pairs of rather thick prominent lateral nerves at right angles to the midrib; rachis hairy; petiolule ca. 0.5 mm. long, with a large gland at the base.

Flowers

Flowers yellow or orange, with pedicels up to 2 mm. long, in 2-5-flowered congested pseudumbels; peduncle up to 9 cm. long (sometimes very short), pubescent or pilose. Sepals up to 6 × 1.5 mm., lanceolate to linear-lanceolate, 3-7-nerved, sparsely puberulous, longer than the capsule. Petals 5-6 × 1 mm., loriate, ± coherent, obtuse. Stamens with 5 longer ones 2 mm. long, 5 shorter ones 1 mm. long.

Fruit

Capsule ca. 4 × 3.5 mm. obovoid-ellipsoid, sepals persistent in fruit. Seeds ca. 0-4 mm. long, flattened-ellipsoid, minutely dark tuberculate, brownish.

Seedlings

Features not available.

Distribution and Ecology

Occurs in CYP from the Torres Strait Islands southwards to the northern part of NEQ near Cape Flattery. Altitudinal range from near sea level to 420 m. Grows in rainforest, open Eucalypt forest, notophyll vineforest, Eucalypt woodland and wooded grassland. Also from Tropical Africa, Madagascar, SE Asia, Malesia and New Guinea.

Natural History & Notes

Leaves sensitive to touch, closing rapidly around the flowers and fruit when disturbed.

RFK Code

4072



Leaves and flowers. © S.J.

Worboys



Leaves. © S.J. Worboys



Herbarium specimen. © CSIRO

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